



# FAQs

## *Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments*

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### ➔ What are the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments?

The interim assessments are one component of the Smarter Balanced assessment system and are designed to support teaching and student learning throughout the year. The items are developed under the same conditions, protocols, and review procedures as those used in the summative assessments.

### ➔ What is the purpose of Interim Assessments?

The interim assessments are intended to inform instruction by measuring global progress of early and midyear performance, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and assessing skills of incoming students. Interim assessments allow students to experience the testing platform and provide further opportunities using accessibility features.

### ➔ Are students required to take Interim Assessments?

No. The interim assessments are optional. They enable teachers to check student progress throughout the year, providing actionable information to inform instruction and help students meet the challenge of college and career-ready standards.

### ➔ What is the difference between the two types of Interims?

There are two options for the interim assessments: the Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) which is designed to mirror the full end-of-year summative assessment and the Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) which are shorter assessments focusing on fewer assessment targets.

### ➔ At which grade levels are the Interim Assessments available?

The content of the tests have been aligned to the Common Core State Standards in grades 3–8 and 11. The interim assessments may be used at any grade level, regardless of a student's enrolled grade or age. The grade level to assess should be based on the purpose of the testing event.

## ➔ Are Interim Assessments secure?

Interim assessment items are NOT secure; however, they are not intended for public use. Teachers or TAs may review the items and their students' responses to the interim items.

## ➔ Are the Interim Assessments available in paper-pencil format?

No. The ICA and IABs are designed as computer-based tests, so a paper-pencil format is not available.

## ➔ How do I administer an Interim Assessment?

Interim tests are administered in the same way as summative tests. The test administrator (TA) must use the TA Interface and the student must log onto the test through the secure browser.

## ➔ How long does it take to administer Interim Assessments?

Both types of the interim assessments are untimed. The number of items on each interim assessment vary by grade and content area. The ICA is expected to take as much time as the end-of-year summative assessment and the IABs can take as little as 30 minutes to administer.

## ➔ How will Interim Assessments be scored?

Most responses are machine scored. All open-ended responses are handscored locally through the interim handscoring module. The machine-scored results are held until the open-ended portions of the test have been handscored and submitted. The results are then combined to generate a student report.

## ➔ How are the Interim Assessment results reported?

For the ICA, results are reported as overall scale scores, with performance level designation, and claim score information. These reports will come from the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) exactly as the summative assessment results are reported. For the IABs, results are reported as 'Below Standard', 'At/Near Standard', and 'Above Standard'.

## ➔ How can teachers use these results to inform instruction?

Teachers can use these results, along with other sources of evidence, to identify student strengths and weaknesses. If the interim is used prior to the start of a unit, the results can lead to adjusting instruction and focus. If the interim is used during a unit, teachers can adequately plan for remediation and re-teaching if necessary. Finally, if the interim is used after a unit has been taught, appropriate modification of future units, curriculum or tests may then occur.